

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 24, 29, 31, and 33 have been cancelled. The rejection of claim 24 under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112 is thus moot.

The rejection of independent claims 1 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by GB Patent Specification No. 1 516 182 (GB `182) is respectfully traversed. GB `182 fails to disclose each and every element of either independent claim 1 or 35 and, therefore, fails to anticipate these claims.

For example, independent claim 1 defines a filter assembly which comprises, as a whole, a filter cartridge positioned within and closely adjacent to a cylindrical perforated cage of a filter housing. As explained in the specification, portions of the filter cartridge may press against the perforated cage and become lodged within the openings of the cage, locking the two together. Consequently, the filter assembly defined by claim 1 as a whole further includes link elements on the filter cartridge and the filter housing which are arranged to engage and rotate the filter cartridge with respect to the perforated cage. The engaged link elements exert a twisting force between the filter cartridge and the perforated cage, breaking the filter cartridge free of the perforated cage and facilitating removal of the filter cartridge from within the perforated cage.

In an analogous fashion, independent claim 35 defines a method for removing a filter cartridge from a filter housing which comprises, as a whole, engaging one or more link elements on the filter housing and one or more link elements on the filter cartridge in response to rotating a removable portion of the filter housing. Engaging the link elements includes exerting a twisting force between a perforated cage and a filter cartridge positioned within and closely adjacent to the perforated cage to break the filter cartridge free of the cage, facilitating removal of the filter cartridge.

GB `182 fails to disclose the filter assembly or the method as defined in independent claims 1 and 35. GB `182 expressly discloses rotation of the flange 35 of the housing 29 but by only a small amount in a counter clockwise direction (see GB `182, page 2, lines 30-36 and Figure 2). No rotation of any kind is disclosed for the filter element 23 or the perforated cage 21. In particular, no rotation of the filter element 23 with respect to the perforated cage

21 is expressly disclosed in GB `182. Further, nothing in GB `182 expressly discloses engaging link elements and exerting a twisting force between the filter element 23 and the perforated cage 21 to break the filter element 23 free of the cage 21.

In addition, nothing in GB `182 inherently discloses these elements of claims 1 and 35. A feature is inherent in a reference only if the feature is necessarily present in the thing described in the reference (see MPEP, §2112, IV). According to the Office Action, the threaded connection between the housing 29, which includes the flange 35, and the upper ring 30, which is attached to the filter element 23, constitutes the engaged link elements of claims 1 and 35. However, the filter element 23 of GB `182 does not necessarily rotate when the flange 35 rotates. Most likely, when the flange 35 is rotated slightly counter clockwise, the filter element 23 will remain stationary and the threaded connection will simply unscrew slightly. Even if the filter element 23 does rotate when the flange rotates, the filter element 23 does not necessarily rotate with respect to the perforated cage 21. The filter element 23 is tightly sealed against the lower end 19 of the perforated cage 21 to prevent oil from bypassing the filter element 23, and the perforated cage 21 is freely movable within the casing 1 (see GB `182, page 2, lines 6-12). If the filter element 23 rotates when the flange 23 rotates, the perforated cage 21, which is freely movable, and the filter element 23, which is tightly sealed to the perforated cage 21, will most likely rotate together as one. There will be no rotation of the filter cartridge with respect to the perforated cage 21, as recited in claim 1. There will be no twisting force exerted between the filter cartridge and the perforated cage to break the filter cartridge free of the cage, as recited in independent claim 35. Instead, the tight frictional engagement between the filter element 23 and the perforated cage 21 through the seal 28, 19 will force both the filter element 23 and the perforated cage 21 to rotate together as a single unit.

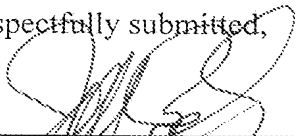
GB `182 thus fails to disclose each and every element of independent claims 1 and 35, either expressly or inherently, and fails to anticipate either claim. Independent claims 1 and 35, and all of the claims that depend from independent claim 1 or 35, are, therefore, patentable.

The rejection of independent claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over GB '182 is also traversed. The filter cartridge defined by claim 20 comprises, as a whole, one or more link elements which exert a twisting force on the filter cartridge to break the filter cartridge free and facilitate removal of the filter cartridge. As previously explained, GB '182 neither expressly nor inherently discloses this element. In addition, the filter cartridge of claim 20 further comprises, as a whole, link elements which include first and second angularly spaced posts that extend axially from an end cap. Nothing in GB '182 discloses or suggests a filter cartridge including link elements that comprise the axially extending posts of claim 20. It is respectfully contended that independent claim 20 and all of the claims that depend from independent claim 20 are thus patentable.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that the patent application is in condition for allowance. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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Amendment or ROA - Regular (JMB/mlg)